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THE

DEFECTS

OF AN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

SIR,

LAST Time we were in Company with you, you was pleaſed to expreſs much Surpriſe, "That ſo few Inhabitants of "this City ſend their Sons to the Uni-"verſity!" And a Friend of yours added, "That ſuch of us as had got a complete "Courſe of Univerſity-Education, had gene-"nerally little more Knowledge or Taſte than "thoſe who never had that Advantage."

We are ſenſible that neither of you is ſingular in your Opinion: Many have expreſſed the ſame Surpriſe, with leſs good Humour than you did; they have attempted to ridicule us, and ſeem to imagine, that our Capacities are ſlower, and our Underſtandings duller, than thoſe of other Men commonly are.

We readily acknowledge, that there is a good deal of Truth in both the Remarks. In proportion to its Populouſneſs, this City ſends few Scholars to the Univerſity; and many who have been there are hardly to be diſtinguiſhed from their Fellow-Citizens, who were never at a College.

And yet we hope it is not difficult to make an Apology for ourſelves, in both theſe Particulars. We will tell you what we apprehend are the Reaſons that moſt of us who have had an Univerſity-Education are ſo little improved by it; when this is done, we imagine your Wonder will ceaſe, that ſo few among us chuſe to ſend their Sons to a Place where themſelves reaped ſo little Benefit; and we beg Leave to acquaint you with a Propoſal that is talked of among our Fellow-Citizens, which, if it is gone into, and properly executed, will put an end to your Surpriſe, and will, we hope, in a ſhort time, remove the ill-grounded Reproach, "That "our Citizens are dull," as it will be an effectual and laſting Method to improve our Youth.

Candid People will preſume or allow, that it is very unlikely the Blame of our Want of Knowledge ſhould lie all on one Side; we think, that from our general Conduct and Tranſactions with the World, we have given little or no Ground to have it ſuſpected, that the Size of our Underſtanding is inferior to that of other Men: If we have little Taſte, or Learning, the Fault

may

may be in ſome degree in our Teachers; the Things taught may be too abſtruſe to be underſtood, or ſuch as muſt ſoon be forgot, being unſuitable to us, and having no Relation to the Circumſtances and Manner of Life we are afterwards to be in.

That a great Part of the Courſe of Philoſophy taught at our Univerſity is of this Nature, is but too obvious: It is evident, that the Univerſities of *Scotland* in general, and particularly this of *Glaſgow*, have been founded and deſigned purely or chiefly for the ſake of that Theology which was in vogue two or three hundred years ago, ſome of the Claſſes bear evident Marks of this original Deſign, being either totally or in part calculated for the Diſputes and Wranglings of Divines, and of little Uſe to the Lawyer or Phyſician, and ſtill leſs to the Merchant or Gentleman.

Of this ſort we reckon Logic and Metaphyſics, which conſumed one whole Seſſion at the Univerſity, and Part of another. Theſe Arts or Sciences (for it is not yet agreed which of them they are) are to the greateſt Part of Students quite unintelligible; and if they could be underſtood, we cannot for our Life diſcover their Uſe.

Nature has made all the chief Pleaſures of Life eaſy to be got; ſhe has alſo made all that Knowledge, which is generally uſeful, eaſy to be attained: Did Men obſerve this, they would ſoon diſcover what is the Knowledge they ought

to acquire and teach: But it has unluckily happened that many, who ought to have been wiſer, have ever neglected that Knowledge which is obvious and uſeful, and have puzzled their Brains to get what is difficult, metaphyſical, and uſeleſs: From the Difficulty they have found in acquiring it, they have concluded it muſt be important, and have taken much Pleaſure in conveying it to others: But, if theſe learned Gentlemen would but attend a little, they would ſoon ſee the Unprofitableneſs of what they are accuſtomed ſo much to magnify. What ordinary Company, what Company of Gentlemen is it, where metaphyſical Diſputes or the Logic of the Schools are ever ſo much as mentioned? Will a Gentleman, by the deepeſt Skill in them, make the better Figure in the Houſe of Commons, or appear with the more Dignity at the Bar? Will his Eloquence in the Pulpit be the more perſuaſive, or will he be the better ſkilled in the Animal Oeconomy? Will Metaphyſics inſpire him with Devotion, give him a higher Reliſh of Virtue, or enable him to act with greater Propriety in Life? Or will the Knowledge of them be of any advantage to the Farmer, the Architect, or the Merchant? We apprehend that none of theſe Queſtions can be anſwered in the Affirmative. And muſt Acquirements that are ſo confeſſedly of no uſe in Life, that are never ſo much as talked of in good Company, waſte a Year or two of a young Man's Time? Is Life ſo long? Is Time of ſo

little Value, that there are not enow of uſeful Studies to fill it up with? Muſt Recourſe be had to Things, which any well-bred Man would be aſhamed to have it ſuſpected, that he had ever employed his Thoughts about?

We are very ſorry to ſay, that if the Time ſome of us attended the Univerſity, and ſpent ſo abſurdly in hearing crabbed Queſtions and metaphyſical Jargon, had been employed in teaching us ancient and modern Hiſtory, and eſpecially that of our own Country, we ſhould have been much more obliged to the learned Profeſſors; we ſhould have been much better accompliſhed, and have appeared to be ſo in the Judgment of thoſe with whom we converſe.

But Logic and Metaphyſics, though they appear to us to be the moſt abſurd, and conſumed the greateſt Part of our Time to no Purpoſe; yet they were not the only Things that waſted it at the Univerſity: The Diſquiſitions we heard about the Origin of moral Virtue, are little better remembered by us, and ſeem to be of little more Uſe.

We are not ignorant, that the Lectures on moral Philoſophy have for many Years paſt been delivered in this Univerſity by very able Maſters, and in a very ingenious Manner; and we are informed, that this was never more the Caſe than it is at preſent: But we apprehend theſe ingenious Gentlemen have rather indulged their Bias to ſome ſingular Opinions of their own, than communicated much Knowledge to

even

even the moſt intelligent of their Scholars. We ſuppoſe alſo, that as their Diſputes are ſo abſtruſe, and their Theories about the Foundation of Morality ſo different, neither can be of much Neceſſity or Uſe.

One contends, that Morality is founded in the Will of God; another, in Conformity and Truth; a third, in the Fitneſs and Unfitneſs, or in the eternal and unalterable Relations or Differences of Things; a fourth, in a moral Senſe or Diſcernment, ſuppoſed to be natural to the human Mind; another eſtabliſhes his Syſtem on Sympathy. But, whatever Scheme the Profeſſor of Morality contrives or embraces, he uſes a long Train of thin metaphyſical Reaſoning to eſtabliſh it, and ſpends a great Part of the Year in laying down Arguments for, and anſwering Objections againſt, his Syſtem. Arguments very pleaſing, and perhaps intelligible to himſelf, as they are familiar to him, and he believes they will pleaſe and improve his Pupils; but they are too ſubtile to be underſtood by them, and leave little or no Impreſſion upon any of their Minds. Here, we imagine, there is much Time loſt, and Pains miſplaced. Might not theſe nice Diſquiſitions about the Foundation of Morality be left out, or ſlightly ſkimmed over, and the Students be juſt as knowing, and as wiſe? How few of them are able to apprehend ſuch Arguments, or to purſue ſuch Reaſoning? Might not the Time be better ſpent in teaching them Morality, in explaining the Nature of the

particular

particular Virtues? Would not this be more adapted to the Capacity of the Scholars, and incomparably more uſeful to them through the Whole of Life? And might not the Profeſſors eaſily purſue this ſimple and uſeful Method of Teaching? Ought they not to deſcend to it, inſtead of torturing their Invention to eſtabliſh what it is little matter whether it be eſtabliſhed or not. There are Objects, the Nature of which may be eaſily underſtood, when their Origin is in vain ſearched after. We ſhould like better that Geographer, who deſcribes exactly the Courſe and Soundings of *St. Laurence* or *Senegal* Rivers, than another who tediouſly and minutely diſputes about the preciſe Spot where each of theſe Rivers takes its Riſe. And we ſhould not expect that a Merchant would thrive, who, when he came to a River's Mouth, delayed to load his Ship with the Commodities which had been brought down the River, or were produced upon its Banks, till he had firſt traced the River upwards, and made himſelf ſure of the Place where it began. Whatever be the Foundation of Morality, the Nature of the particular Virtues may be deſcribed; the Youth are capable of underſtanding them, though perhaps not able to enter into abſtruſe Inveſtigations about the Origin of moral Virtue. To know what Virtue is, is uſeful to Men in every Station of Life; but who is the better for having heard or underſtood a great many ſubtile Diſputes about its Origin. For our Parts, we ſhould not grudge, though the learned

Profeſſor

Profeſſor kept theſe entirely to himſelf, or he might for his particular Comfort and Satisfaction communicate his knotty Ideas to that one of his Scholars, who has moſt Connexion with leading Men, and has the beſt Chance to be recommended to ſucceed him; and who will either eſpouſe or think himſelf obliged to be at an immenſe Labour to deſtroy the moral Theory of his Predeceſſor.

Theſe different Theories may be amuſing to contemplative Minds; and, for aught we know, there may be ſome Truth in each of them, and at bottom they may be leſs inconſiſtent with one another than they appear to be; but whether they be or be not inconſiſtent; whether any of them or none of them is true, we will be bold to ſay, that no one of them, after ſo much Time and Pains ſpent upon it, ever enabled that Scholar who underſtood it beſt to reſtrain a ſingle Paſſion, or to perform one virtuous Action. And we ſhall ſurely be thought to have kept within Bounds, while we pronounce no more concerning the above-mentioned dry Parts of Science, than one who is eſteemed a good Judge has done, with reſpect to a long and compleat Courſe of Univerſity-Education *. "It would "be hard to ſay what one Duty of Society, or "what one Office as a Citizen, a Student is "qualified to diſcharge or ſuſtain, after his cloſe "Application of ſo many Years?"

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* Sheridan, on Britiſh Education.

Some of us were the Scholars of an illuſtrious Teacher of Morality, himſelf a perfect and ready Maſter of Greek and Latin. He introduced, or revived, a high Taſte for Claſſical Learning in this Place; and, while he lived, he kept it alive. If ever a Profeſſor had the Art of communicating Knowledge, and of raiſing an Eſteem and Deſire of it in the Minds of his Scholars; if ever one had the magical Power to inſpire the nobleſt Sentiments, and to warm the Hearts of Youth with the Admiration and Love of Virtue; if ever one had the Art to create an Eſteem of Liberty, and an Abhorrence and Contempt of Tyranny and Tyrants, He was the Man. What pity was it, that for three or four Months a Year ſuch ſuperior Talents ſhould have been thrown away on metaphyſical and fruitleſs Diſputations! When theſe were got over, how delightful and edifying was it to hear him! If we did not make ſome Improvement during the few remaining Months of the Seſſion, the Fault, we acknowledge, was in ourſelves; and perhaps our Docility was leſſened, and our Minds ſtupified, as we had the Year before been accuſtomed to hear Lectures, which neither deſerved nor catched our Attention. For the moral Diſputes, as that Gentleman managed them (tho', as we have hinted, ſomething really uſeful ought to have been taught inſtead of them) were not reckoned ſo inſipid as the Logical and Metaphyſical. We can yet remember, that had the Regulations of the College permitted that Students might have gone directly from

the Languages to Ethics, many in this City, who looked upon Logic and Metaphyſics as futile and unintelligible, would have ſent their Children to him. In that caſe, they would have had an Advantage that was much deſired; their Children would have both heard the Lectures at one hour, and have been examined upon them at another; whereas, by the Rules, except they had been firſt at the Logic Claſs, they could but hear the Lectures.

But beſides the Intricacy of the Things taught, there was another Cauſe why moſt of us imbibed but little Knowledge at the Univerſity: Our Profeſſors loved Rank, and kept themſelves at a greater Diſtance from their Scholars, than common School-maſters do. This hindered them from knowing our Genius, or particular Turn, and directing us to a proper Courſe of Reading. When we left the Univerſity, we were totally unacquainted with Hiſtory; We had formed no Plan of moral or of natural Knowledge: Had our Teachers been at a little Pains with us, they might eaſily have diſcerned the Bent of our Genius, and what natural Capacity each of us had; from our Circumſtances, they might have formed probable Conjectures what Buſineſs in Life we were deſigned for; and they might have directed us to the Books proper to be read: We are of opinion, that the Uſefulneſs of public Teachers lies in this, as much as in delivering their Lectures, and perhaps more. By ſome Pains taken in this manner, Scholars might in a few Years

attain

attain more real and distinct Knowledge, than without such Direction they are ever like to attain in their Lives. We say this, as we have often done, from deep-felt Experience. We were, when young, greedy of Knowledge, and continually reading something or other; but nobody was so kind to advise us and set us on a right Track. We hope we are not vain in imagining, that if our Diligence in pursuit of Knowledge had been well directed, when our Memories were strong, our Thirst after Knowledge great, and our Minds free from Cares, we might have made some sort of Progress in Literature; but this was not done, which we deeply regret, and must regret while we have Breath.

Our Teachers however professed to be great Admirers of the Ancients; but they were too proud or too lazy to imitate them. Did They satisfy themselves with delivering a dry Discourse on Philosophy, containing Ideas to which their Pupils were Strangers? Did They reckon the Business of the Day over, when the Hour was run? Did They expect to convey new and cramp Notions in such a hurry, into the young Mind? Was this all that was done by *Zeno* in the *Stoa*, by *Plato* in the *Academy*, or by *Epicurus* in his *Gardens*? No, they did much more, they threw aside all distant and magisterial Airs; they put themselves on a Level with their Scholars, they walked and conversed familiarly with them, they led their Minds in an easy and gradual manner to the Perception of Truth; and by conversing

and repeating over and over the ſame Point, made them thoroughly to underſtand it, and fixed it in their Memories.

If the learned Gentlemen we ſpeak of had but conſidered how little they were able to recollect of a ſet Diſcourſe, or of the beſt Sermon they ever heard, we are perſuaded their Method of Teaching would have appeared imperfect even to themſelves.

We mention but another Cauſe of our having made ſo little Progreſs; and it is this: We were ſet on too many different Branches of Knowledge at the ſame time; there was an odd Sort of Emulation induſtriouſly excited among us; it was eſteemed honourable to attend many Claſſes; it was thought ſhameful, and a Mark of Poverty, to be at few: Moſt of the Students in the three upper Claſſes were one Hour at Latin, one at Greek, one at Mathematics, and one or two at Philoſophy, all in the ſame Day; and this Method was continued through the whole Seſſion: By which means our Attention was ſo divided, and our Minds ſo diſtracted with a Jumble of different Things, that not one of them took hold of us; and it was next to impoſſible, that even thoſe of us who wiſhed and endeavoured to learn, could ſucceed. This produced a laſting bad Effect: An Inclination to ramble in purſuit of Knowledge ſtuck faſt with us after we left the Univerſity. We had been taught to be fond of a Fault, into which from Lazineſs or Vanity we might naturally have fallen. We could not endure

dure Conſtancy and Aſſiduity, we ſoon became weary of any one thing; and, as we had been long obliged and accuſtomed to do ſo, we ſkipped haſtily from one ſort of Reading to another; an Error which we have not yet been able thoroughly to correct. It is however, manifeſt, that one Thing at a time ought principally to have been inculcated; but we, who ourſelves contrive Schemes of Profit, can eaſily ſee for whoſe Benefit the Multiplicity of private Claſſes was firſt ſet on foot, and continues ſtill to be purſued.

The Things we have ſlightly noticed will in ſome ſort account for the ſmall Morſel of Knowledge moſt of us brought from the Seat of Learning; and if we, in the City, have little Erudition, our College-Companions in the Country have not more: We muſt, and we will affirm, that it is very rare to find a Country Gentleman bred at the ſame Univerſity, who is in Taſte and in Extent of Knowledge any degree above ourſelves, tho' they have had much more Leiſure to purſue Knowledge, than ſuited with our active and buſy way of Life: A Preſumption, both that the Things taught were improper, and that the Method of Teaching them laboured under ſome eſſential Defect. Nay, we muſt be forgiven to ſay it, the learned Profeſſors ſeem to be convinced of all this, and to be of the ſame Opinion with ourſelves. They had lately two Vacancies in the Univerſity in their own Diſpoſal: They looked round the Country, and conſidered the Abilities of all the Clergy-

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men and Students who had been educated by themſelves; and among ſuch a great Number they could find none, that, even in their own Opinion, were qualified to fill them. They made choice of a Clergyman at a great diſtance, and of a Student, who both of them had got their Education at other Univerſities: By which Step they reflected all the Honour they could on theſe two worthy Men; but at the ſame time made an open and candid Acknowledgment of the Wretchedneſs of their Plan, and of their own Debility and ill Succeſs, at begetting Knowledge in the Minds of their Scholars; like frigid or impotent People, who are forced to adopt Strangers into their Family, being incapable to beget any Children of their own.

The Faults in Education we have mentioned have had bad Effects on all ſorts of People, who reſort or have reſorted to the Univerſity, the Clergy themſelves not excepted; and we own, they have had very bad Effects upon ourſelves. The Things taught are abſtruſe and dark; and it is little to be wondered at, if we brought no Knowledge of them away with us: If any of us brought away ſome knowledge of them, it is as little to be wondered if we ſoon loſt it: It was of ſuch a Nature as to be eaſily forgot; it was ſo remote from common Uſe, that it could not be remembered.

Tho' we have been at ſome Pains to acquire a little Knowledge from Books and Company, we are ſenſible that in writing this Letter we give

but too manifeſt Proofs of the Defectiveneſs of our Education. But ſtill, we believe this was no ways owing to our Want of natural Capacity. Our City can boaſt that it has produced as compleat Burgeſſes, and Gentlemen of as refined and enlarged Underſtandings, as any in the Iſland; that is, when they were educated or improved at other Places.

What we have ſaid, is not with a View to depreciate an Univerſity Education, but to apologiſe for ourſelves, and to remove, Sir, your Surpriſe at our little Knowledge, and that ſo few of us ſend our Sons to the Univerſity: And by this time, we hope, our Apology will appear to be pretty compleat; an Apology which we have been forced to make. When we ſaw the Laugh raiſed againſt our Town in almoſt every Company of Strangers, and heard ourſelves ſo often and ſo groundleſsly reproached for want of Taſte, we judged it was but a piece of Juſtice to ourſelves and our Fellow-Citizens, to open our Minds to a Gentleman of your Diſcernment and Candour; and when the Cauſes of what we are blamed for are laid open, though not near ſo fully as we could eaſily have done, equitable Judges will ceaſe to rally us. But if we ſhall be afterwards reproached upon the ſame Score, we will beg leave in our turn openly to expreſs our Surpriſe, that it ſhould ever be expected by any Man of ſober Senſe, that we ſhould ſend our Sons to waſte a Year or two of their Lives in learning Things ſo uſeleſs, abſurd, and ridiculous, as

Technical

Technical Logic and Metaphyſical Speculations are confeſſed to be. We attended to them with Reluctance and Diſguſt; we have now hardly any Traces of them in our Minds; and can we think that our Children will be more pleaſed with them, or remember them better?

The ſenſible Part of Mankind will, we hope, agree with us, That Education ought to be calculated for the Times we live in; that the Aim of it ſhould be to make the Youth good Men, and uſeful Subjects; to prepare them to acquit themſelves well in the particular Buſineſs they are to live by, and to make a manly and decent Figure in the Companies they may be in. We think it manifeſt, that the muſty and intricate Parts of Science we have mentioned, are no ways ſubſervient to any of theſe Ends.

We are generally a Commercial People; except in Matters of Commerce, our Ideas are pretty much circumſcribed. The Thoughts of great Numbers among us move in no very wide Circle, and never towards Metaphyſics. We figure not to ourſelves any very wide or noble Plan of Education, which might dignify high Life, but would be meerly imaginary and unattainable in our Circumſtances: To theſe our Education muſt be ſuitable. The Things taught us ought to be ſuch as immediately fit us for Buſineſs; or are ſome way relative to our Employment, or analogous to that Range of Thought to which our Buſineſs may be ſuppoſed naturally to lead us; or which may adorn Converſation,

tion, and free us from the Imputation of Ignorance.

What theſe Branches of Knowledge are, it is not difficult to ſee; practical Mathematics, Hiſtory in general, the Hiſtory of our own Country, and of thoſe in the Neighbourhood or with which we carry on Commerce, natural Hiſtory, Geography, the Hiſtory of Commerce, and practical Morality. Were there any Doubt about the Parts of Science that are propereſt to be taught us, it might be removed, by obſerving, that thoſe of us who are ſtudious naturally apply to ſome of the Branches we have juſt mentioned. Many in this City, without any Advantages in their Youth, have by their own good Senſe, and the dint of Application, made a very conſiderable Progreſs in the Knowledge of Hiſtory, Belles Lettres, and Mathematics; but we know none who ever turned their Heads to ideal Entities, or to quibbling Syllogiſms. And if we had an Opportunity of ſuch a Courſe of Education, our City would ſoon ſhew to the World, that the Deſire and Taſte of uſeful and attainable Knowledge are as general among us as in any other City whatſoever, that is but equally populous.

Some eight or ten Years ago, the Principal and Profeſſors of the *Mariſhal College* at *Aberdeen*, "in order to render the Study of the Sciences more natural and progreſſive, did unanimouſly agree to depart from the old Plan, and from that time forth to obſerve a very different Order.

They continued, indeed, to teach the Claſſical Learning as formerly, but inſtead of Logic and Metaphyſics, they appointed that Year to be ſpent in teaching Hiſtory, Geography, Chronology, an Introduction to natural Hiſtory; and that all the Students of that Claſs ſhould attend the Leſſons of the Profeſſor of Mathematics: That the next Year be employed in natural Philoſophy, and the Laws of Matter and Motion; in Mechanics, Hydroſtatics, Pneumatics, Optics, and Aſtronomy; and that the laſt Year of the Courſe be allowed to the Study of the abſtract Sciences, Pneumatology, Morals, Logic, or the Art of Reaſoning." A conſiderable Improvement in the Method of Teaching, and which does honour to the Gentlemen who appointed it.

We were very much encouraged when firſt we heard that the *Mariſhal College* had ſo far thrown back uſeleſs Things, and accommodated their Courſe to modern Times. There appeared to be ſo much good Senſe in what they had done, the Alterations they had made were ſo viſibly advantageous and neceſſary, that we made no doubt but our Univerſity would immediately follow ſo edifying an Example, and would make further Improvements upon it: But after we had waited for ſome time, we were entirely damped, when upon Enquiry we were informed, that the Profeſſors were not to depart a Hair-breadth from their Plan and Practice. They are, it ſeems, tied down either by Cuſtom,

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or by Inclination, or by Rules, to obſerve a Courſe of Teaching, a great Part of which is at this time of Day uſeleſs and abſurd, and more eſpecially ſo with reſpect to us.

We do aſſure you, Sir, that when we ſaw that no Relief was to be expected from the Univerſity, we were in diſtreſs for our Children, and felt, perhaps too ſtrongly, ſome Emotions of Indignation againſt the learned Profeſſors, whom we looked upon as ſtubbornly tenacious of their own antiquated Plan. We had frequent Converſations with one another, expreſſing our Grief that this was the Caſe; and ſome of us were then pretty much inclined to provide a proper Remedy, and to remove, at our own Expence, the Inconveniency to which our Youth were expoſed. But, through a Multiplicity of Buſineſs, and Want of ſufficient Harmony among ourſelves, we allowed our good Purpoſes to cool; and, with reſpect to ſo important a Deſign, ſuffered ourſelves to relapſe into a lethargic Inactivity, for which we frankly own we do not know what Excuſe to make.

What we wiſhed for and intended was, to have in this City a School or Academy for inſtructing our Youth in that Knowledge which is proper to give them an early Liking to Religion and Virtue; that which will fit them for Buſineſs, and enable them to diſcharge the Duties of Life with Honour, and appear to Advantage in the World.

We were rouſed from our Lethargy, when we ſaw the Royal Burgh of *Perth* before-hand with us, in eſtabliſhing ſuch an Academy as we wiſhed for. Senſible of the like Diſadvantages we complain of, they have ſet us a Pattern highly worthy of our Imitation. The Magiſtrates of that Town, aſſiſted by a worthy Clergyman in the Place, have, like Gentlemen of Taſte, and Men of the World at the ſame time, generouſly provided for the Education of Youth: An Exertion of public Spirit, for which Children and Parents will eſteem and honour them at preſent, and which in time to come will be remembered as a Monument of their good Senſe and provident Care of Poſterity!

Their Aim is "to train up young People for Buſineſs and active Life; or to give ſuch a practical and compendious Courſe of Education, as may in ſome meaſure qualify the Gentleman, the Merchant, or even the Mechanic, to act with greater Advantage in their reſpective Stations: For this purpoſe the Town-Council have fixed upon two Maſters, with each a Salary of 50 *l.* beſides a Gratuity of two Guineas to be paid at the Entry of each Student to each Maſter for the Seſſion; which is to begin every Year on the Firſt of *October*, and to continue 'till the End of *May*.

One of the Maſters is to deliver, 1. A ſhort Hiſtory of Philoſophy, and the Riſe and Progreſs of Arts and Sciences. 2. A Courſe of natural Hiſtory,

Hiſtory, in which he gives an Idea of Botany and the Animal Œconomy. 3. A compendious View of Poetry, Rhetoric, Logic, and Moral Philoſophy; and 4. A Courſe of Chronology and civil Hiſtory, Antient and Modern, eſpecially the Hiſtory of *Britain*, with regard to its Conſtitution, political Intereſt, and Commerce.

The other Maſter is to teach, 1. Arithmetic. 2. Book-keeping. 3. A Courſe of Mathematics; and 4. A Courſe of natural Philoſophy, illuſtrated by Experiments. Each of the Maſters is to finiſh his whole Courſe in two Seſſions, if poſſible; otherwiſe what remains is to be gone through, at proper Times, in a ſubſequent Seſſion, without any further Charge to the Student. A Writing-Maſter is to attend the Academy every Day; and a Teacher is to read the ſuperior Greek and Latin Claſſics one Hour every Morning, with ſuch of the Students as would make further Progreſs in the Languages: Both theſe Maſters to be paid by the Students.

The Inſtruments for the Experimental Part, they are to purchaſe by Contribution, and have already about 200 Guineas ſubſcribed for that Purpoſe. Their firſt Seſſion begins in *October*." This is their Plan. It is, no doubt, well contrived for that Place. It has nothing in it that can be called uſeleſs or ſuperfluous. Every thing to be taught has a Tendency to the End propoſed; but it may be proper to vary a little from it, and to make ſome Additions in an Academy here.

Writing,

Writing, Arithmetic, Book-keeping, and alſo ſome Parts of Mathematics are here taught in private Schools; Hiſtory, Chronology, and moſt of the other Parts mentioned in the *Perth* Scheme, are hardly even attempted; the Things taught are neceſſary to accompliſh a Merchant's Clerk; the Things hitherto neglected, would form the Merchant for extenſive Buſineſs and for manly Converſation; and it is unqueſtionably, by teaching the hiſtorical and philoſophical Things, that a School either obtains or deſerves the name of an Academy.

Writing, Arithmetic, and Book keeping may be left to be taught as before; and then two Maſters will, with the greater Succeſs, manage the remaining Parts.

The Province of the one will be, 1. Mathematics. 2. Geography. 3. Natural Hiſtory; and 4. Natural Philoſophy, illuſtrated by Experiments.

The Province of the other will be nearly as in the Plan of *Perth*; 1. Hiſtory of Philoſophy, and the Riſe and Progreſs of Arts and Sciences. 2. A compendious View of Poetry, Rhetoric, and moral Philoſophy. 3. A Courſe of Chronology and Civil Hiſtory, Antient and Modern, eſpecially the Hiſtory of *Britain*.

The Buſineſs of the one Maſter will be, beſides Mathematics, to teach the moſt entertaining and uſeful Parts of natural Philoſophy, that of the other will be chiefly Hiſtory.

We

We are perſuaded that every impartial Perſon will ſee at once the great and remarkable Utility of ſuch a Courſe of Education, and the Propriety of erecting ſuch an Academy in this Place as ſoon as it can be conveniently done.

The Town of *Perth*, however conſiderable in itſelf, is ſmall in compariſon of this populous, wealthy, and thriving City; the ſame Encouragement that is given by them, would be a very light Burden upon us, whether it were given out of the Revenues of the City, or contributed by a Number of the moſt opulent Citizens: But as a far greater Number of Students would attend the Academy here, leſs Salary to the Teachers might ſerve the purpoſe; nay, there is great Reaſon to believe, that if the Magiſtrates and principal Inhabitants will, as we hope, countenance the Project, in a very few Years little or no Salary at all may be neceſſary.

This Plan will interfere but little with that of the Univerſity. The Aims are quite different and diſtinct; what is deſigned by the Academy is, to train up young People for Buſineſs and active Life; the Aim of the Univerſity is, to make Scholars of them: And, no doubt, a great Adept in ſcholaſtical Learning is ſtill to be made by ſome Skill in the learned Languages, and by a long and laborious Courſe of Study. This we eaſily diſcern; the Clergy are ordinarily the People who ſtudy longeſt, and enquire deepeſt into Science; they do it, or begin to do it, at the Univerſity;

and when Vacancies happen in Univerſities, generally ſpeaking, they can only be ſupplied from the Clergy, or by ſuch as have been educated to be Clergymen. But the Education we propoſe is compendious, and of general Uſe; our School will not keep any Student from the Univerſity, who is intent on making a great Figure, by deep and metaphyſical Reſearches: And we are ſure the Profeſſors are more diſintereſted than to wiſh any Scholar ſhould conſume Four or Five Years at their Colleges without being better accompliſhed for Converſation, or more prepared for the Employment by which he propoſes to live.

We allow the Excellence of profeſſed Scholars, and ſhall leave it to Colleges to fill their Heads with Materials for Argumentation: We propoſe no ſuch thing; and therefore we perſuade ourſelves, that the Maſters, who love every Branch of Knowledge, will encourage our Plan, and give us their beſt Advice: And we ſubmit it to themſelves, if it would not be worthy the Generoſity of ſuch Patrons of Science to apply ſome Portion of their large Revenues to begin and carry on ſo uſeful and neceſſary a Project.

But, though contrary to our Intention, our Plan ſhould ſeem to interfere a little with that of the Univerſity, or threaten to keep ſome Scholars from them, this ought not to diſcourage us, nor to put the Profeſſors into any ill Humour: Senſible that they need ſuch

a Motive

a Motive to rouſe them to more Activity; they ſhould for their own Honour and Uſefulneſs wiſh us Succeſs: Both they and the Teachers of the Academy will the more exert themſelves, when they know that their Honour and their Intereſt too depend upon their Activity and Diligence.

It is a vulgar Error to believe, that Teachers of Religion different from the eſtabliſhed one, are in all reſpects hurtful. The Reformed have forced the Catholics to throw aſide many of their Abſurdities, and have ſtirred them up to ſearch for more Knowledge. The Diſſenters in *England* have contributed to promote the Learning and Sobriety of the Churchmen; and perhaps even the Seceders in *Scotland* have, by their Strictneſs, ſtimulated ſome of the Eſtabliſhed Clergy to a Strictneſs and Diligence in their Office, beyond what they might otherwiſe have attained.

The Maſters of an Univerſity need ſuch a Stimulus, as much as the Teachers of Religion. When Men have got into a ſettled Way of Life, Lazineſs often gets the better of the good Purpoſes they really had, when they firſt entered into it. The Senſe of Duty and the Love of Fame, are not able to overcome the Love of Eaſe. It is the Opinion of ſome intelligent Perſons, that if the Eſtabliſhed Clergy, inſtead of having Salaries fixed for Life, were hired from Time to Time, we ſhould get better Sermons from them than even thoſe we get at preſent. Whatever Truth there may be in this, we are perſuaded

there is much more in the Remark, when applied to the Maſters of a College. They have their fine Lodgings, and they have their fixed Salaries as the Clergy have; but the Clergy have one ſtrong Motive to ſpur them on, which the Profeſſors have not. There are other Clergymen juſt at hand, and if any one is very lazy and negligent, the People will leave him; but be the Profeſſors ever ſo ſlothful, there is no College near to receive the Students from them. Could the Youth be taught by others at as little Expence to their Parents, the Profeſſors would be at more pains and beſtir themſelves in a very different manner.

We have ſaid thus much in general, to prevent ſome Prejudices that might have been conceived againſt our Plan, as if it were to interfere with the Univerſity; and we have ſhewn that inſtead of being hurtful to that learned Body of Men, it will produce very ſalutary Effects upon them; and, we hope, it may reaſonably be preſumed, that by the Activity of our Teachers, and the conſtant and cloſe Application of their Scholars, more real and uſeful Knowledge may be delivered and acquired in two Years, than can be in ſix or ſeven in the diſputatious and ſlow Method uſual in Univerſities, where there are ſo few Hours of Teaching, and ſo many of Diverſion.

It has been obſerved already, that the principal Points in view in the Education of Youth ought to be, to form them to the Love of Religion and Virtue,

Virtue, to render them ſerviceable to the Government, uſeful to themſelves and to that Society to which they may more immediately belong, and agreeable in the ordinary Commerce of Life.

With reſpect to forming our Youth to be good Subjects, this Plan needs make no Proviſion. The Inhabitants of this City, and of all the Country around, are almoſt to a Man well affected to the preſent Government, and, were it neceſſary, would riſk their Fortunes and their Lives in its Support. Though we think young People ought to be made acquainted with the Nature of that happy Conſtitution under which we live; and this may be advantageouſly done, in reading to them the Hiſtory of our own Country.

But Religion merits the moſt ſerious Attention: It is judged to be a great Defect in the ordinary Education, that, except thoſe who formally ſet themſelves to the Study of Divinity, no Care is taken to acquaint the Students with religious Principles, or to tincture them with a Senſe of Piety. Religion takes faſter hold of the Mind, and has a ſtronger Tendency to make Men good and virtuous, than many ſeem to imagine. It is of infinite Importance, with reſpect to the other World; and it is the moſt powerful Reſtraint to preſerve Youth from thoſe Vices, which they are but too ready to fall into. Vices which are both hainous, and hinder them from making that Figure in the World which they are entitled to make. A Senſe of God

makes the Life ſober and regular. Parents ought to recommend Religion to their Children, and all Teachers ſhould both by Example and Inſtruction ſhew their Scholars, that they have a high Eſteem of Religion, and a deep Senſe of its Importance to promote all the valuable Intereſts of Mankind.

We have lately ſeen a printed Sermon upon the Cauſes of the Decline of Religion, and we verily expected to find one Thing aſſigned as a Cauſe of that Decline, which has been and continues to be much talked of, and much lamented in this Place; but which, it ſeems, the Author did not advert to. If he had pleaſed, he might have mentioned the bad Diſcipline of Colleges, and the too little Appearance of Piety in the Deportment of the Maſters; which, though perhaps not ſo extenſive, is as real a Cauſe of Irreligion as any he has named. It produces very diſmal Effects; the Students, who afterwards apply to Divinity, are cool and indifferent in the Study of it; thoſe who apply to Buſineſs, in Town or Country, bring along with them from the College a viſible Averſion to Religion; and with this pernicious Contagion they infect the unwary, who ſee them or converſe with them.

The blunt Saying of a plain and honeſt Citizen, ſome time after public Prayers began to be diſuſed in the Univerſity, was quite agreeable to our Sentiments. When he was entering his Son to one of the Philoſophy Claſſes, 'I am in-'different, ſaid he, I am indifferent about your

'nice Diſputes: Teach my Son Religion and 'Morality; teach him to govern his Paſſions, 'and to love God and Men: I had rather have 'him a pious and good Man, than poſſeſſed of 'all the curious Philoſophy you can teach him 'in ſeven Years.'

Religion ought to be the Ground-work of every Courſe of Education, and the Principles inſtilled into the Minds of young People ſhould be ſcriptural and ſound. This is certainly right, in every View. We have known ſome young Men, who were marred in their Buſineſs, and rejected by thoſe who could have advanced them, merely becauſe they were much ſuſpected of entertaining ſome very looſe and unſound Opinions.

But, to conſider Religion in the loweſt View, namely, as it is a Science and a Subject of Converſation, the Youth ought certainly to be taught it. Every Gentleman and Merchant ſhould be able to talk about the Tenets of that Religion, which is eſtabliſhed in his Country. He ſhould know ſomething about the Government and Diſcipline of that Church of which he is a Member.

We ſhould weary out your Patience, Sir, and protract this Letter to an indecent Length, were we to mention the Uſe of every particular Branch of Literature propoſed to be taught by the projected Plan; and were we to ſhew how well this Plan will anſwer the remaining Ends of Education; namely, to prepare young People to be uſeful in Life, and to appear as accompliſhed

pliſhed Gentlemen in Converſation. We will, in a few Words, take notice of the Advantages which a Plan of this ſort has, effectually to communicate the Knowledge which is propoſed to be taught by it.

1. The Things to be taught are all of them capable of being learned. They are commenſurate to the Capacity of the young Mind. Logical Quiddities and metaphyſical Subtleties are totally exterminated. Hiſtory, Geography, the natural Productions of a Country, the Manners of the People, the Manufactures and Commodities they trade in, may all be underſtood and remembered. Theſe are Things uſeful to be known by a Commercial People. And, by the way, we beg leave to ſay, That if Merchants have not dipped much into metaphyſical and moral Theories, they have by their Voyages and Travels furniſhed the World with a far more valuable Sort of Knowledge: We mean that of the Manners and Cuſtoms of Men, which is certainly more entertaining, and perhaps lays a ſurer Foundation of Morality than any of the Cobweb Schemes which have been ſo finely ſpun out of the Imaginations of fanciful Men, who have all their Lives been immured within a College, and are quite deſtitute of the Knowledge of the World.

2. We are almoſt certain of having the ableſt Teachers the Nation can afford. They will readily be left to be choſen and employed by us. A Place in an Univerſity is conſidered as eaſy,

honourable and lucrative. It is almoſt looked upon as a Sine-cure; it is not ordinarily the moſt ingenious and able for teaching that is pitched upon, but he who is connected, or whoſe Friends are connected with, and can ſerve the Men in Power: and this appears to be growing more and more in Faſhion. When a Vacancy happens we hear every one ſaying, "Who will get "this Place, who has moſt Intereſt with ſuch a "Duke or ſuch a Lord." A Man's Sufficiency is ſeldom or never mentioned; his Ability is no Recommendation of him; his total Ignorance of the Things he is to teach is no Obſtacle to his being preferred to the Office: For twenty Years paſt there are not above One or Two Inſtances where one was either preſented by the Crown, or choſen by the Faculty, merely or chiefly becauſe he was thought beſt qualified to teach the Claſs he was called to teach. If there are any who are fit to teach, by a proper Encouragement we may have them.

But the Directors of the Academy, beſides Capacity to teach, muſt have other Qualifications: They muſt be Men of a grave and reſpectable Character, who will add Weight and Importance to the Things they teach, and attract the Eſteem and Love of their Scholars. The Profeſſors in our Time, to do them Juſtice, ſeemed well enough qualified in this reſpect. Several of the Things taught by them were, as we have ſaid, abſolute Futilities; and yet even in theſe Things, from the Solemnity of the Teachers, we at that time

time ſuſpected there might be ſome Value in them; or, perhaps, their Diligence in teaching conferred ſome imaginary Worth on every thing they taught. We have often obſerved, that the earneſt Application of Teachers to their Buſineſs procures them Reputation, and adds Weight to the moſt frivolous and inſignificant Things that may be delivered by them. The Men were guilty of no Littleneſs or Folly; they were Men of exterior Dignity, and we could not but pay ſome Regard to every thing they ſaid or did. Teachers of that ſort, when the Knowledge communicated by them is uſeful and ſuitable, do ſucceſsfully recommend Knowledge and Virtue; and by their regular, decent, and religious Behaviour, they create a Liking of Religion in the Hearts of their Scholars.

3. The Hours of teaching in the deſigned Academy will be more than are allotted to it in Colleges. It is abſurd and hypocritical for Men to give high Commendations of Science, and to uſe ſo ſlender Pains, and ſpend ſo little Time in teaching it. Men are become ſo lazy, and the Deſire of Literature is ſo feeble, that it is a Wonder if Knowledge of every ſort does not take its flight from amongſt us. The Practice of Univerſities is quite altered; not one Half of the Hours are employed in teaching that were one Hundred, and not a Third of them that were two Hundred, Years ago. The Preſident De Meſmes ſhewed a Manuſcript of one of his Anceſtors to Mr. Rollin; wherein

wherein that ancient Gentleman gave an Account of his Studies at the Univerſity of Toloufe. "In 1545, ſays he, I was ſent to Toloufe with my Preceptor and Brother to ſtudy Law, under the Direction of an old gray-haired Man, who had travelled much. We got up at Four, and having ſaid our Prayers, we began our Studies at Five, with our great Books under our Arms, and our Writing-Tables and Candleſticks in our Hands. We attended at Lectures 'till Ten without Intermiſſion; then we went to Dinner, after having haſtily collated for one Half-hour what we had writ down. After Dinner, by way of Diverſion, we read Sophocles, or Ariſtophanes, or Euripides, and ſometimes Demoſthenes, Tully, Virgil, and Horace. At one o'Clock to our Studies again, at Five we returned Home, to repeat and turn to the Places quoted in our Books 'till after Six, then we ſupped and read ſomewhat in Greek and Latin*." Such Pains and Time were then beſtowed.

But in our Univerſity ſeveral of the Maſters do not teach above One Hour, and others of them but Two Hours a Day. Do they really expect to convey the Knowledge of any thing ſo haſtily, eſpecially of the dark and intricate Points they uſually teach; and we cannot but obſerve, that they treat their Students as if they were Men and Children at the ſame time. A noble Lord made a Donation of the College

* Rollin's Belles Lettres, Vol. I. Chap. ii. Art. 1.

Garden to the Maſters and to the Students to walk in for their Health and Recreation. The Students, even thoſe who entered to the lower Claſſes, it is pretended, were then Men, and had Diſcretion not to deſtroy the Beauty or Policy of the Garden. They are now very young when they enter to theſe Claſſes, and the Maſters have deprived all the Students of the Liberty of ſtepping into the Garden, which by the Donation they had and ſtill have a legal Title to. In another reſpect they treat the very youngeſt of their Scholars as if they were full-grown Men; they teach them an Hour or two, and then ſend them adrift; and they are ſo thoughtleſs, are ſo little looked after, and have ſo much Time to play, that the Leſſon ſo haſtily read over to them is neglected and immediately forgot. In the caſe of the Garden, it argues the Superiority of the Maſters to treat their Scholars as mere Children; in the matter of Teaching, it contributes to their Eaſe to treat them as if they were Men.

The teaching for ſo few Hours in Colleges has a very fatal Effect upon Children: by getting ſo much Diverſion, they contract ſettled Habits of Inattention, and their Minds are ſo diſſipated that it is oftentimes found impoſſible to fix them; by which means many have been ruined, and could never afterwards, by all the Arts and Intreaties of their Parents, be brought to apply themſelves in earneſt to any Buſineſs whatſoever.

Common

Common Senſe would dictate, that the two lower Claſſes at leaſt, ought to be treated as Children are in other Schools; they ought to be kept as it were under the Rod, and obliged to apply to their Buſineſs for four or five Hours a Day: and ſo many Hours of Attendance at the feweſt, ſhall, it is propoſed, be given by every Teacher in the deſigned Academy.

4. Our Teachers ſhall ſtudy the Genius, and learn the Views of each particular Scholar, and direct them to a proper Courſe of Reading when they are at Home. We ſuffered ſo much ourſelves, through want of ſuch Direction, that we will be at the utmoſt Pains that our Children may not ſuffer as we have done. The Teachers will put thoſe Books into their Hands which are moſt accommodated to their Genius, and relative to the Buſineſs they are deſigned for. They will converſe often and familiarly with them, and twice every Week will, in an eaſy Manner, enquire into the Progreſs they have made, and cauſe them to make Obſervations themſelves upon what they have been reading. Poſſeſſed of ſuch Accompliſhments as we have mentioned, they will be in no dread of being puzzled by the Queſtions that may be put to them by ſprightly Lads of Fourteen or Fifteen, nor under any Neceſſity of concealing their Ignorance by an affected Gravity, and entrenching themſelves behind a Form.

5. To confuſe or diſtract the Minds of the Youth by different Studies at the ſame Time, will be avoided with the moſt ſcrupulous Care. All poſſible Art will be uſed to make what is the immediate and principal Study of the Scholars amuſing and delightful to them: The other things, that are allowed them by way of Diverſion, will always have ſome Relation to the one thing, which is at that particular time the chief Object of their Purſuit.

Theſe are certainly great and viſible Advantages, which Scholars at the Academy will enjoy above thoſe who attend the Univerſity.—The Things to be taught are plain and important.—The beſt qualified Men will teach them.—The Hours of Attendance will be more than double thoſe that are given at the Univerſity.—The Teachers will converſe familiarly with the Scholars, and direct them to a proper Courſe of Reading.—Confuſion of Studies will be cautiouſly avoided, and all will be done in a clear and expreſſive *Engliſh* Stile.

They propoſe at *Perth*, no doubt for very good Reaſons in their Situation, to have a Teacher of the ſuperior Claſſics. We confeſs we do not ſee the Propriety or Neceſſity of ſuch a Teacher in the Academy here. We think it ought to be an *Engliſh* Academy, and that the chief Deſign of it ſhould be to train up young People for Buſineſs. Indeed many of our Citizens have found that their Children had leſs Latin when they left the Humanity-Claſs than

when

when they entered to it; and every Body is convinced that in the Two Years ſpent at Greek and Latin in the Univerſity, a very poor Proficiency is made in compariſon of what might well be expected. But the great Evil would be beſt remedied by Childrens ſtaying a Year or even two Years longer at the Grammar-School; in which Two Years they would certainly acquire more Skill in the learned Languages than they could poſſibly do in Six or Seven at the Univerſity: And if the Rector can diſcharge his preſent Office, and alſo teach a ſuperior Claſs, we are informed he is very well qualified to do it. But if it is neceſſary there be another to teach the higher Claſſics along with him, a very particular Search ſhould be made to find a proper Perſon; he muſt be a Man of Taſte and Imagination: it is not difficult to find one who can drudge and labour, and by the help of Grammars and Dictionaries can hammer out the Conſtruction, and heavily tell his Scholars the Meaning of an Author; theſe are Commodities not rare to be found, but ſuch a one is far from anſwering to the Idea we have of a Teacher of the ſuperior Claſſics: He ſhould be a Man of Senſe and Genius, of Spirit and Vivacity, who feels the Author's Senſe, who imagines himſelf in the Place of the Poet, and is warm with his Fire; who diſcerns, who ſees and feels the Beauty of the Hiſtorian's Deſcription. In ſhort, one who feels the very Sentiments of the Hiſtorian or Poet, and transfuſes them into the Minds and

Hearts

Hearts of his Pupils. We would have him at the ſame time to have Diſcretion enough to paſs over ſeveral Parts of Ovid, Horace, and Catullus, which were they taught in a ſpirited Manner might be dangerous to young People. A dull phlegmatic Teacher may ſeem to have ſome Advantage in this Reſpect: He can read over the whole of Horace, and not miſs a Line from Beginning to End, without a Smile: He can explain and comment upon the moſt licentious Paſſage without feeling himſelf, and without exciting in his Scholars any diſorderly Emotion; but then he feels as little and makes as little Impreſſion with reſpect to any the moſt beautiful Picture or ſtriking Deſcription: In reading the Paſſages of a Tragedy or Epic Poem, which ſhake the human Frame and fill the throbbing Breaſt with the alternate Emotions of Admiration, Terror, Pity, and Diſtreſs, his Heart is quite unmoved, inſenſible, and callous. Such a one can never teach to Advantage, nor excite Admiration of antient Learning in the Minds of Youth: They weary, and think it is doing Penance to hear him.

A Teacher of Spirit and Taſte fires his Pupils with the Love of claſſical Learning: And though it is digreſſing a little from our principal Point, we cannot but take notice, that ſuch a Teacher would be of unſpeakable Advantage to thoſe in higher Life than we are. If Gentlemens Sons made a competent Progreſs in claſſical Learning, and were beſides inſtructed

in the ſeveral things propoſed to be taught at the Academy, we aver they would have a far more compleat and genteel School-Education, than has ever been publicly given in this Country.

And ſuch a Teacher of Greek and Latin ſhould be carefully ſought for, on account of thoſe Students who are deſigned for any of the learned Profeſſions, and eſpecially of thoſe who are to be Clergymen: For as Education is ſo tedious, and is become ſo expenſive, we think that Divines may and ought to be trained up in this Method. When they are well founded in the Languages, they may by proper Direction be taught as much Knowledge, and to expreſs themſelves with as much Propriety, Preciſion, and Force, as Divines ordinarily attain, in one third part of the Time which they would be obliged to attend a Divinity-College: And if they were found to be as knowing as College-Students, we do not ſee but Preſbyteries might get over any Difficulty in Licenſing them; provided always their Morals be good and their Principles orthodox. For which purpoſe we would have the Gentleman who has the Direction of their Studies found above all Suſpicion, even tho' he ſhould not be ſo deep in Learning as we could wiſh.

For it would ſeem that in Divinity it is the Genius or the Application of the Student, and not the Ability of the Profeſſor, that produces the Effect. We have heard ſome of our Divi-

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nity-Profeſſors much run down, and others as much applauded; but we could never ſee this Difference by the Effects of their Teaching, or that thoſe, who ſtudied under the weak Profeſſor, were a whit inferior to thoſe who were the Scholars of the able one: Nor indeed do we diſcern that theſe Preachers appear worſe in the Pulpit or in Company, who were never at a Divinity-College at all, ſeveral of whom we know and eſteem.

In Things that relate to Divinity, the learned Profeſſors ſeem to think in this manner: For three or four times, they have choſen Hebrew Profeſſors, who, except the Letters, were ſaid to know no more of the Language; and Church-Hiſtory, though they have a Profeſſor of it, has not been taught for many Years paſt: It is ſuppoſed that one may teach Hebrew, without knowing it; and that Divines may know Church-Hiſtory, without being taught it: Juſt as the little or great Ability of the Divinity-Profeſſor makes no Alteration upon the Scholar.

But if it is ſo with reſpect to Divinity and what relates to it, the Caſe is quite different with reſpect to a Profeſſor of Mathematics: Whether he has or has not the Art of Teaching, is manifeſtly known by the great or ſmall Proficiency which his Scholars make. It is impoſſible that thoſe who ſtudy at one Univerſity ſhould be generally good Mathematicians, and that thoſe who ſtudy at another ſhould generally know nothing of the Matter, if the Profeſſors

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were equally ſkilful and diligent in teaching. The Gentleman who has long taught in this Univerſity has unqueſtionably great Ability; but whether he has run over the Propoſitions in too great a Hurry, or has employed too few Hours in teaching, it is a well-known Fact, which we are ſorry to mention, that he has had little Succeſs in teaching: There are extremely few who have been made Mathematicians by him. We mention this becauſe if the two Maſters, under whoſe Direction the Academy is propoſed to be, ſhall be thought to have too much to do, there may be, without any additional Expence, a Teacher of Mathematics alone. If he has only the Countenance of the Magiſtrates, ſuch Numbers will attend him, that he will not need a Halfpenny of Salary: And if he has the Art of Teaching (which he muſt have, otherwiſe it were better not to have him) we may reaſonably expect in a very few Years to furniſh out a Choice of able Mathematicians to the Univerſity, and ſave them the Trouble of going to a great Diſtance in queſt of one.

The Plan, as we have ſpoke of it, extends to fewer Parts of Literature than that of *Perth*; yet we perſuade ourſelves every one muſt be convinced of the Advantage and Neceſſity of it; and, if poſſible, we wiſh to ſee it eſtabliſhed, or at leaſt begun this very Seaſon.

Many Branches of Manufactures have been introduced, and many have been puſhed as far by the Inhabitants of this City as has been done

by any in the Kingdom; and if we ſhould make no Proviſion for the Inſtruction of our Youth, when ſuch Proviſion is ſo neceſſary, we ſhould but too juſtly deſerve Reproach.

But from the Opulence of this City, we cannot but indulge the Hope, that the Academy here will be more extenſive than that which has been agreed upon by the People of *Perth*. We wiſh the *French* Language was taught more perfectly than has yet been done here: It has become almoſt an univerſal Language, and the Knowledge of it is particularly uſeful to trading People; and eſpecially, we wiſh that there were an *Engliſh* Belles Lettres Education. Except to Gentlemen, and to thoſe in the learned Profeſſions, the learned Languages are not neceſſary. A Man may make himſelf Maſter of an immenſe Variety of Knowledge without any other Language but *Engliſh*: And of how great Importance would it be, if young People were made acquainted with the Beauties of the *Engliſh* Poets, and moſt elegant Proſe Writers, and were taught ſomething of Compoſition in their own Language. To know their own Language well is of more Importance to them than even the moſt full and accurate Knowledge of Greek and Latin: While they applied to the Study of it, they would be taught not Words but Things, not Stile only but to ſee and feel the moſt noble Sentiments, and to expreſs themſelves with Elegance and Force.

It is really aſtoniſhing, that the Study of the national Language has been ſo much neglected, and that a Courſe of Education, proper for Men of Buſineſs, entirely in *Engliſh*, has never been ſet on-foot: If we were not accuſtomed to ſee the Thing every Day practiſed, it would appear abſurd to the laſt Degree, that Children, who are to be put to Buſineſs as ſoon as their Age permits, ſhould ſpend Five or Six Years in learning dead Languages; Languages which it is foreſeen they will immediately forget when they go from School; and which, though they could be remembered, can never be of any uſe to them. If that Time were employed in conveying Ideas into their Minds, as they are capable to receive them, and in teaching them the *Engliſh* Language, they would have more Knowledge, and they would acquire a great Facility of writing and ſpeaking what they know. If they were firſt taught to pronounce juſtly, and were then ſet to compoſe little Things, and to imitate the Stile of Mr. Addiſon, Dr. Swift, and ſome others, the Letters of Men of Buſineſs would appear to much more Advantage than ſome of them do at preſent. There would not be ſo frequent Complaints that People do not write to their Friends at a Diſtance: The real Cauſe of which oftentimes is, that they have neither a competent Stock of Ideas, nor a ſufficient Command of Language. To write a Letter of News, of Friendſhip, of Thanks, or Congratulation, is above their Capacity, or is at beſt a tedious

and difficult Taſk. If Children were properly inſtructed in their Mother-Tongue, they would not when they became Men faulter and heſitate in Speech, but would expreſs their Meaning with Eaſe and Beauty.

The Taſte which has been raiſed at *Edinburgh* by Mr. Sheridan ſhould excite our Emulation. The Parts of Science we have mentioned before are abſolutely neceſſary; this laſt is alſo highly uſeful and highly ornamental.

The Plan, Sir, which we have laid before you, is neither chimerical nor difficult to be executed; it is eaſy, advantageous, neceſſary, and not expenſive; and we cannot ſuffer ourſelves to fear but that our City will immediately agree to it, or to ſomething like it: For our own part, we have merely ſtudied the Honour and Advantage of our Fellow-Citizens. We deſire no Commendation for having mentioned to ſeveral of them the great Advantages of ſuch an Academy. If we are in the right, you will be able to judge by this Letter, which you are at Liberty to uſe as you pleaſe. There are, no doubt, others of our Citizens, who are both able to form a Plan that is more compleat, and alſo to forward the Execution of it: Let them have the whole Praiſe, but let the thing be done, and done as ſoon as poſſible.

And we think ourſelves ſure that it will be done, when we conſider the Merit and Vigilance of the honourable Gentlemen, who are our preſent Magiſtrates. One of them is illuſtrious

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in his own City, is well known at a great Diſtance, and has been long reſpected by thoſe in the higheſt Rank; he had a College-Education, but ſoon ſaw the Impropriety and Defectiveneſs of it; and, by a Strength of Judgment, a Depth of Penetration, and Retentiveneſs of Memory peculiar to himſelf, he attained a Knowledge of the Laws and Conſtitution of his Country, which is ſeldom to be found in profeſſed Lawyers. He has acquired ſuch Variety of Knowledge, Moral, Hiſtorical, Political and Commercial, and is ſo diſtinct and accurate upon every Point, that few Burgeſſes or others in the Iſland can pretend to excel him. What is propoſed to be taught at the Academy, is but the Rudiments of a few of theſe Parts, in each of which he is a Maſter.

We have another Gentleman in public Office, who is alſo juſtly looked upon as a very extraordinary and happy Genius. His Skill in Commerce is extenſive; his Invention of new Branches of Manufacture, fertile; his Activity to promote them unwearied; his Generoſity and public Spirit are diſcerned and honoured by ſeveral of the Nobility, and by many of the Gentry and Men of Taſte, who court his Company: He is poſſeſſed of ſuch Accompliſhments in Science and Taſte, which by a quick Diſcernment he ſaw the Value of, and acquired; that did he not by a ſingular Greatneſs of Mind acknowledge the Diſadvantages of his Education, hardly any body that converſes with him would ſuſpect but that he had been converſant in literary Contemplations from his earlieſt Youth. We

We have, beſides, many Citizens, whoſe Knowledge is extenſive, and whoſe Elegance of Taſte is undiſputed. The Magiſtrates and they will heartily concur to promote ſo uſeful a Deſign. They will be convinced, that among a numerous Youth there are comparatively ſpeaking but few, who in Science and Taſte can hope to ſucceed as they have happily done, unleſs an early and proper Method be taken to facilitate the Acquiſition of Knowledge, and to teach them the Elements of theſe Parts which are of univerſal Uſe.

For that Reaſon ſuch an Academy as we have given a Sketch of is ſo uſeful and neceſſary, that there ought to be one of them in every populous City within *Great Britain:* and certainly People will ſome time or other open their Eyes, and not ſuffer themſelves to be deluded by mere Sounds, nor imagine that, becauſe a Thing is called an Univerſity or Seat of Learning, that therefore it will convey every ſort of uſeful Knowledge; when they ſee, or may ſee ſo plainly, that the Knowledge taught is unſuitable to ſuch People as we are; and, were it ſuitable, no ſuitable Time and Pains are employed to teach it.

And we ſay one thing further, in behalf of our City, which to you may appear incredible; and yet nothing is more true. It is the Nearneſs of the Univerſity to us, that is the Cauſe of our little Knowledge, and that an Academy like that now projected did not long ago take place. We expected from time to time that the Profeſſors would

would turn from intricate and uſeleſs, to uſeful and plain Parts of Science, and teach them with Care and Diligence. Had it not been for this vain Imagination, we are verily perſuaded *Glaſgow* would have ſet an Example to *Perth*, inſtead of *Perth*'s having ſet one to *Glaſgow*.

We have at preſent the beſt Hopes, and imagine that we are within reach of having the Reproach of our Want of Taſte, and that we are careleſs about the Education of our Children, entirely wiped away. We think ourſelves as ſure as we can be of any thing that is future, that, if this Propoſal is properly executed, within eight or ten Years every Stranger and every diſcerning Perſon will obſerve a ſenſible and general Improvement in Taſte and Knowledge among the Inhabitants of this City; and that from thenceforth there will not be the leaſt Ground for any ſuch Surpriſe as you expreſſed.

But if, after all, nothing is done, we ſhall ſuffer you and every one to rally our Citizens as you pleaſe; and as your Raillery, tho' poignant, is genteel, ſo far from avoiding your Company, we will court it; and judging ourſelves unconcerned, we will with Patience, perhaps with Pleaſure, hear your Burleſque without opening our Mouths.

Indeed if our City ſhall relapſe into a Lethargy, as before; if there be not Senſe enough to ſee the Utility, or if there be not Authority, or Spirit, or Numbers enough to forward the Execution of a Project ſo neceſſary and eaſy, we muſt

acknowledge that, notwithſtanding all our Partiality to ourſelves and our Citizens, we ſhould not know what to ſay further in our Defence. We ſhould, we fear, be forced to confeſs that we betrayed ſome Symptoms of that Dulneſs, and that Careleſſneſs about our Children, for which we have been ſo often blamed; or that we miſtook our Childrens Intereſt, and eſteemed a ſmall Saving of Money to be of more Importance to them, than the ample Fortunes they might be fitted to acquire, and all the great and ſhining Improvements in Taſte and Science, which by a proper Courſe of School-Education they might eaſily make.

But if unhappily our City ſhall not be rouzed to Action by the Example of *Perth*, if our principal People, being too buſy and careful about other Things, ſhall neglect or poſtpone a Thing ſo needful, we make not the leaſt doubt, but that other populous Towns in the Kingdom, where ſuch an Academy may be as neceſſary as it is here, will act a more generous and ſpirited Part, and will wiſely ſacrifice a ſmall Expence to form the Minds of their Children, to accompliſh them for Buſineſs, and to make a Gentleman-like Figure in Converſation.

Mean time uſeful Arts and valuable Knowledge will flouriſh at *Perth*. In a Commercial Senſe at leaſt, *Perth* will be the modern *Athens* of this Country: Numbers of young Men properly educated there, will ſpring abroad and make a Figure in the ſeveral Trading Towns of

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the Nation, and particularly in this great City. Strangers will, by the Superiority of their Parts, acquire great Fortunes; they will lead and conduct the Affairs of this City, and be reſpected by the Nobility and Gentry, while our Sons, free-born Citizens, through want of Education, will be humble and tame under the Sway of greater Merit, and make no becoming Figure.

Theſe are Events eaſily foreſeen. The Example of *Perth* is not that which ſhould chiefly influence us; it is the Neceſſity, the viſible Neceſſity of the Education propoſed. Let the *Perth* Scheme be ill contrived, let it be worſe executed; ſuppoſe there be ſome who, from ſordid Love of Lucre, are ſquinting at it with an evil Eye, and wiſhing to blaſt it with their noxious Breath; ſuppoſe they and their Emiſſaries be ſtriving to get hold of this hopeful Infant, to cruſh it, or to ſtifle it in its Cradle; nay ſuppoſe, contrary to all Probability, that its frightened and ſelf-intereſted Enemies ſhould be able with their poiſoned Arrows to reach its Vitals, and to lay its Head in the Duſt; it is certainly poſſible to contrive the Plan of a manly and genteel Education for Men of Buſineſs, and to ſecure the Execution of it, in this Place. There are here a great Number, who have been long and deeply practiſed in Commerce, who have great natural and acquired Abilities, and are poſſeſſed of thoſe Attainments which are uſeful, and which are ornamental. Theſe Gentlemen

are well qualified to direct the Education of young People who are deſigned for buſy and active Life. And we muſt agree, that till this be done, our City will not make that Figure in *Great-Britain* which it is capable of making, nor appear with a Luſtre in proportion to its Trade, its Wealth, and its Greatneſs.

On the diſagreeable Suppoſition that no Academy is ſet on foot here, and to prevent, were it in their Power, the diſagreeable and well-foreſeen Effects of that Neglect, there are not wanting a Number of judicious Citizens who ſeem determined to ſend their Sons to be educated at *Perth*, if they ſhall be informed that the Plan agreed upon there is but as well executed as it is contrived. We hope and aſſure ourſelves that they will not be under the Neceſſity of ſending them out of our own City for that Purpoſe. At any rate, you know our Mind by this Letter. We hope to be exempted from your Satire; or, if you ſometimes play it off in our Company, we will conſider it as not intended perſonally againſt ourſelves; unwilling however, to join you in it, even tho' we ſee it juſt, we will beg leave to be ſilent.

You ſee, Sir, that we pay all poſſible Deference to the Univerſity. It has been long, and continues to be a loud Complaint in ſeveral Kingdoms of *Europe*, that the Science retailed at Univerſities is unprofitable and dangerous. Wiſe Men have judged, that if ſuch Science has taken

any hold of young People, the wiſeſt Thing they can do is to unlearn and forget it as ſoon as poſſible *. Perſonages of the higheſt Rank and Merit have ſeen Cauſe to be thankful or well ſatisfied, either that they never were at an Univerſity, or that by ſome favourable Accidents they were ſoon removed from it †. And we know ſenſible Men among ourſelves, who judge, that it would be much better for the Intereſt of Learning, that every Part of Science were left to be taught by private Academies and private Teachers; that there ought to be a total Subverſion of the Univerſities of this Nation; and that the Price of the Buildings, together with the Revenues and Salaries, ought to be applied to augment the Livings of the Clergy, or to pay the National Debt. On the other hand, we think they ſhould rather be allowed to continue as they are. They are Monuments of Antiquity. We conſider what Good they may have done of old, when the Courſe taught by them was ſuitable to thoſe remote Times. There are valuable public Libraries in them, which it were pity not to take care of. Our City may have Influence to procure Places in them for the ſuperannuated Teachers of the Academy, who, by their aſſiduous and uſeful Labour will highly

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* Moleſworth's Preface to Account of Denmark Shafteſbury's Characteriſtics, Sully's Memoirs, Diſcours ſur l'Eſprit.

† Henry IVth of France. See Sully's Mem. Du Maurier, &c.

merit ſuch Salaries, and ſuch Eaſe, in their old Age. They are uſeful in ſome Reſpects, and they may change their way of Teaching, and become ſo in more. We find our Hearts warm towards our own Univerſity, and towards the Maſters that taught us; with all their Defects we loved them, and we reverence their Memory. We remember, with a Mixture of Regret and Pleaſure, the idle and happy Days we ſpent about the College; how we went ſauntering up and down at our Eaſe, with our Gowns, the Badges of Scholars, about us; tho' it appears to you, and if we would, we cannot get it denied, that we received but a poor Pittance of Inſtruction.

We wiſh the College to ſubſiſt and thrive; *eſto perpetua.* The Crown or the Faculty may now and then pitch upon an able Teacher educated at our Academy, or elſewhere, whom we would wiſh our Poſterity might have the Opportunity of being inſtructed by, juſt as we at preſent have the Opportunity of the Ethic Claſs, to which many of our Citizens will ſend their Sons, after their Courſe in our own Academy is finiſhed. When they have firſt learned uſeful and neceſſary Things, thoſe of them who are in eaſy Circumſtances, and have Genius, will be entertained with the ingenious and amuſing Theory of ſo eminent a Maſter.

If there is any Expreſſion in this Letter which may ſeem to convey a too diminutive Idea of Univerſities, we beg you will look upon it as a Puſh made

made in neceſſary Self-defence, and aſcribe it to our Eagerneſs to ſcreen ourſelves and our Fellow-Citizens from the Point of your Raillery, and that of others, which has been often and keenly levelled againſt us. With great Reſpect we are,

SIR,

Glaſgow, Oct. 1761.

Your moſt humble Servants.

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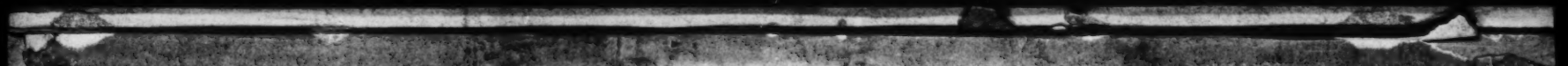
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